

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 24

By Cooper

A RESOLUTION to recognize Darrell Waltrip on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who in their years of work have distinguished themselves in their respective fields and who have brought honor to Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Darrell Waltrip is one such estimable person who has reached the highest level of accomplishment during his 40-year career as a legendary champion in stock car racing; and

WHEREAS, Darrell Waltrip showed signs of being destined for racing greatness from his early years in Kentucky, first racing in a go-cart at twelve, and then, four years later, experiencing the feel of driving a stock car on a dirt track; he also set a state record as a high school track champion; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Waltrip honed his racing skills at the Tennessee State Fairgrounds' track during the late 1960s, distinguishing himself as a formidable competitor and a favorite of the Nashville fans; and

WHEREAS, Darrell Waltrip entered the highest level of competition in his sport in 1972 when he started his first NASCAR Winston Cup race; he quickly became the premier driver in

racing, while making visits to victory lane across the United States and earning the admiration of fans and competitors alike; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Waltrip's accomplishments during his twenty-nine years of NASCAR competition place him among racing's elite, as he won Winston Cup championships in 1981, 1982, and 1985; he displayed admirable consistency by finishing among the top five in the Winston Cup standings in 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1987, and 1989; and

WHEREAS, he was victorious in eighty-four races, the third most of any driver in history, including thirty-seven victories at super speedways; and

WHEREAS, he sat on the pole fifty-nine times, including twenty-four poles at super speedways; he won a modern record of eight races from the pole position in 1981, including a record four victories consecutively from the pole; and

WHEREAS, the 1989 champion of NASCAR's most celebrated race, the Daytona 500, Darrell Waltrip is the only five-time winner of the Coca Cola 600 at the Charlotte Motor Speedway; and

WHEREAS, this dynamic athlete surpassed the fifteen-million-dollar mark in career earnings in 1996, thus becoming the third driver in NASCAR to reach this elite plateau; he also is the only driver to win \$500,000 or more in a season nineteen times; and

WHEREAS, Darrell Waltrip achieved unparalleled success in a manner that inspired his many fans, the media, and his peers; he earned recognition as Most Popular Driver in 1989 and 1990; was named Tennessee Professional Athlete of the Year in 1979; was honored as Auto Racing Digest Driver of the Year in 1981 and 1982; was recognized as National Motorsports Press Association Driver of the Year in 1977, 1981, and 1982; and was the first three-time winner of the American Driver of the Year award in 1979, 1981, and 1982; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Waltrip is leaving the cockpit, but not the sport he loves; he is embarking on a new career in television broadcasting, in which he will be giving back to his beloved sport and his fans by sharing his considerable knowledge of racing as an analyst; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that this General Assembly should celebrate Darrell Waltrip's magnificent career with him, his wife Stevie, his daughters Jessica and Sarah, his home town of Franklin, his fellow NASCAR competitors and his legion of fans; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we extend to Darrell Waltrip our congratulations for an accomplished career, and offer to this distinguished Tennessean our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling life away from the number 66 Ford Taurus and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.